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# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

## United States Department of Agriculture

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

### THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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QUILTS ARE ECONOMICAL,  
PRACTICAL, BEAUTIFUL  
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The art of quilt making is one that logically may stage a comeback in these days of simplified wartime living, when every piece of material needs to be used effectively. Scraps of goods too small to use in any other way can serve a useful purpose in patchwork quilts.

Also, with blanket mills and bedspread mills turning over more looms and labor to producing goods for military use, many a woman may find it worth her while to make some of her own bed coverings.

For beginning quilt makers, textile specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Home Economics offer the following suggestions.

### USE MATERIALS THAT WILL LAST

Quilts should last many years. Some become heirlooms. And you're going to put quite a bit of work into making even the simplest quilt. So use only new cloth and good thread.

If you do much home sewing, you may have enough scraps of leftover material for a quilt. Friends and neighbors often are glad to contribute what they have on hand if they know the scraps will be put to good use. Try to collect your quilt materials from these sources, rather than buying new yardage. If you do buy new material ask for short remnants that can't be used for larger articles.

Although quilts sometimes are made of wool and silk, cotton is the most widely used--and in these days, practically the only material available. With so much more wool needed by our armed forces, homemakers are being asked to turn good scraps of that material back to manufacturers for reprocessing.

Interlinings may be of cotton batting or flannelette--or good parts of worn blankets. A quilt with one thickness of interlining is as warm as a light summer blanket. Additional layers give extra warmth.

You may wish to piece the back or lining of the quilt, too, if you have enough large scraps on hand.

#### MAKING THE BLOCKS

"Have patience and work carefully" are the best words of advice for quilt makers.

Choose a simple pattern for your first quilt of your own design if you want to work one out. A combination of squares or of squares and triangles offers you plenty of opportunity for striking arrangements. Avoid all patterns that call for sewing curved pieces of material together. This is hard for even an experienced sewer.

Also avoid patterns that call for very tiny pieces. The time and effort it takes to sew these very small bits together is hardly justified in most cases.

Press all scraps before you begin to cut. Then cut out larger pieces of the quilt first--larger pieces for borders, and for strips or blocks to hold the patched blocks together. You can cut smaller pieces out of trimmings left after cutting the larger ones.

Allow  $3/8$  of an inch for seams around every piece of the blocks. It's best to allow this in the pattern itself then you are sure to have the same allowance on all pieces. Otherwise you may forget to cut some pieces a bit larger. Some



quilt makers like to make sure of seam accuracy by marking in pencil the seam allowance, or by pressing the material back to indicate the seam line by a crease.

The number of blocks you need to make depends upon the size of the blocks, the size of the finished quilt, and the way you set the blocks together. Some women like to set some patterns together block to block. Usually, however, a plain or small printed unpatched block of matching or contrasting color or narrow strips of another material make a better background for the patched blocks.

You'll want a quilt for a double bed to measure about 70 by 80 or 72 by 84 inches. For a single bed, make a quilt at least 63 by 80. And for a twin bed, a quilt should be 66 by 80 inches at least. If you are making the quilt to use in place of a bedspread, you'll probably want one about 96 inches long—or at least 105 inches long if you're going to tuck pillows under it. Best way to find the exact size you want your quilt is to measure on your own bed.

Sew blocks together either by machine or by hand—just so the stitches are small and even. Use size 50 thread if you sew by hand, a somewhat finer thread on the machine. Be especially careful not to stretch bias edges of the pieces. Even a little stretching may be enough to throw the whole quilt off—so the blocks won't match as they should.

#### ASSEMBLING THE QUILT

After you've sewed the blocks and set them together, press every seam open so the extra thicknesses are evenly distributed and won't show through. Press the whole top flat. Mark the pattern for quilting on the right side.

Then lay the quilt lining on the floor wrong side up. Smooth it out. Put in the interlining. If the interlining is cotton batting, sew bats together with loose stitches so that the bats do not overlap and make a bulky seam. If you use more than one layer of batting, alternate the places where the seams fall.

Over the interlining, place the finished top. Baste all three together. Put them on a regular quilting frame or use a large embroidery hoop. For quilting take small even stitches and be sure to catch all three layers. Very thick quilts must be tufted rather than quilted--that is, tied together in numerous places over the quilt by small lengths of yarn run through the quilt from top to bottom, brought back again, tied and clipped off evenly over the whole quilt.

Beginning quilters will do well to try only simple quilting patterns--diagonals and squares and other straight line combinations rather than fancy curved patterns.

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MAY 20, 1942 :  
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WASHINGTON,

### THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

### --- FIRELESS COOKER IS AID TO WARTIME COOK ---

Fireless cookers, practically forgotten since the last war, are coming to the fore again these days. Although they are not being used extensively as yet, they offer many possibilities for busy homemakers and for canteen cooks.

"An inexpensive, safe, and efficient fireless cooker may be made at home," points out Lenore Sater, chief of the Housing and Household Equipment division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Home Economics. Detailed directions for making fireless cookers at home have been worked out by her division. These are available free from the U.S.D.A.

Miss Sater here outlines some of the possibilities, warns of some of the limitations, and makes recommendations for the use of a fireless cooker.

### WHAT IT IS

There's nothing magic about a fireless cooker. It is simply a well-insulated box that keeps the heat in, the cold air out. Food is put into the box hot. It is kept hot by the insulation with, in most cases, the addition of heated stones or blocks.

If food is merely to be kept warm for a time, the insulation may be enough. If food is to be cooked, stones that hold heat must be used. A cooker that is used with heated stones must have a fireproof insulation.

Directions worked out at the Bureau of Home Economics suggest that a fireless cooker be made of a large can, such as a 100-pound lard can, with a smaller can to fit inside. Between these two cans goes a layer of insulation, such as rock wool. On top of the inside can is a thick cushion stuffed with insulating material. Food is cooked in pans with tight-fitting lids set inside the smaller can. Preheated blocks of soapstone or concrete provide the heat for cooking. These go under and above the pans of food.

#### SUGGESTED USES

Many inexpensive main dishes and certain desserts call for "long slow cooking." Many a homemaker, busier than ever these days, hasn't the time to supervise food on the stove for long cooking periods. But, she can put such food in a properly made fireless cooker, come home in the evening from the factory or farm work, and have the main part of the meal ready to eat. This supplemented with fresh vegetables and other foods that may be quickly cooked will provide a nourishing meal ready in a short time.

Canteen workers can use fireless cookers to keep food warm, when it is cooked in one place and served in another. Less often, they may want to use it for the actual cooking.

Fireless cookers are best suited to dishes that need long, slow cooking and for those that do not have too stringent cooking deadlines. Among the dishes that may be made in them successfully are baked beans, soups, stews. They also may be used to cook less tender cuts of meat, cereals, dried fruits, dried vegetables--even steamed puddings and breads.

They are not suitable for baking pies or cakes--or any other product that needs a high, dry, quick heat.



PERFECT YOUR OWN RECIPES

Each cook who uses a homemade fireless cooker will have to work out through experiment the cooking time for each of her own recipes. Always be sure the food is boiling before it goes into the cooker. You'll find that you'll need less liquid in making dishes in the cooker than you do in those made atop the stove, because there isn't so much evaporation. If you open the cooker before the food is completely cooked, reheat the food to boiling before you put it back again.

Soapstone and concrete blocks will maintain a heat of boiling about 2 to 4 hours, depending on their size. A stone is hot enough to put in the cooker when a pinch of flour sprinkled evenly on the top browns in 15 seconds.

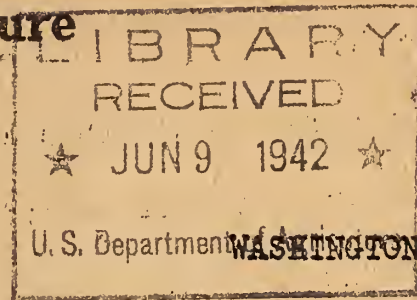
Be extremely careful when you use the fireless cooker--make sure that you don't leave food in the cooker after it gets below the simmering point. In fact, food should come out of the cooker piping hot. There are a number of dishes that can become sources of dangerous food poisoning if they are left long at lukewarm temperatures.

Fireless cookers are not necessarily fuel savers. Fuel is saved if you heat the blocks and food on a coal or wood range. If you have to use gas or electricity it's almost as cheap to cook the food on the stove.

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## United States Department of Agriculture



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### THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

### TAKE CARE OF THAT HAT

Now is the time to come to the aid of next winter's hat, so to speak. At least, it is time to give definite thought to those hats left over from last winter which are still good for another year. Don't neglect them with warm weather coming — if you do, the moths won't and the loss will be all yours.

Many a hat is good for another season's wear and it is important that it be given the chance to prove its worth now that apparel savings are an important factor in the victory effort. Besides, with so many textile materials and labor hours being devoted to clothing our armed forces, it is necessary that the homemaker salvage all she can each season.

Look over your winter hats. If some can be used next season, tuck them away during the summer months so they will be on hand when needed. However, store them well or your purpose may be defeated by the work of moths, dust, and perhaps even mildew. Following are some pointers from textile and clothing experts in the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, on just how to store your hats with the best results.

### CLEAN BEFORE STORING

Do not put a soiled hat in storage. With felt and other winter fabric types it is particularly necessary that all possible dust and stains be removed before hats are stored. If this is not done, soil may become even more deeply



imbedded during the storage period. It is also true that unclean fabrics attract moths more rapidly than clean ones. In any event, a soiled hat must be cleaned for wear next fall and it is best to do this now so it will be ready for immediate wear when needed.

#### METHODS OF CLEANING

Whether or not the hat is very soiled, brush it well first to remove all surface dust. Use a stiff bristle brush and work with the nap of the fabric. A metal brush is too harsh for use on felt and may give it a shaggy appearance. After brushing, examine the hat for spots and other soiled places and try to fit the cleaning process to the type of soil.

Dust spots which cannot be lifted by mere brushing often can be removed from felt by gently erasing the area with art gum. For greasy or oily spots, use a thick paste combining carbon tetrachloride with talcum, corn starch, or chalk dust.

Spread this paste on the spotted area and let it remain until thoroughly dry. Then brush it off. Repeat this treatment if necessary. Although especially recommended for white or pastel colors, this method can be used on dark colored felts. If a light "powder" mark remains after the brushing process, rub the section lightly with a cloth dampened with plain carbon tetrachloride until the mark disappears.

Inside-hat bands, commonly called "sweat bands," are often soiled by hair oil. The ribbon type band, most common in women's hats, can be cleaned easily in the majority of cases. If a regular cleaning fluid will not remove this soil, take out the ribbon and wash it or replace it with a new band.

In men's hats the hair oil stain is often more noticeable. This stain is usually on the inside-hat band, the lining, and the outside ribbon decorating the lower crown area. Cleaning fluid will remove much of this stain and ribbons may

also be washed if necessary. However, in cleaning the band, be careful to watch for rubberized materials, paper or leather types, and give them special care.

Suede hats are cleaned in the same manner as suede shoes. Obtain a regular suede cleaning liquid and daub it on the soiled places. Allow it to dry thoroughly and then brush with either a stiff bristle brush or a rubber sponge type. A fine sandpaper may be used to lift crushed sections of the suede. In cases where the leather appears "rusty" or dingy it is possible to use a liquid suede polish having a dye base to restore the color. This is applied in the same manner as the cleaner.

#### TIPS FOR STORAGE

Store each hat in its own box if possible, to help keep its shape. Do not store hats by merely placing them on hat stands and putting them in a closet. By doing this the crown may become misshapen. Also, without box protection, the hat is easier prey for dust, moths, and other damage.

Select for each hat a box large enough to give plenty of room for the necessary tissue paper "padding" as well as for the hat itself. Place a soft wad of tissue paper in the crown to preserve its shape and then lay the hat on its brim, which should be turned up if possible, on a nest of crumpled tissue paper in the bottom of the box. Pack some tissue paper lightly around the sides and top of the hat. For protection against moths, put moth crystals on the paper covering the top of the hat, the crystals being so placed because their vapors tend to go downward.

If the hat is trimmed with a sizeable feather, veil, or a fragile ornament, it is better to take these off before storage so they will not become crushed. Feathers should be brushed into shape before put away and veils can be laid between sheets of tissue paper and placed in the same box with the hat if there is room.

Little soft hats, with no particular body stiffness and turbans are easy to



store several in a box. Put them away clean, and also with moth crystals if their fabric is such that moths will be attracted.

Store hats in a dry place. Dampness is not good for any fabric. For instance, a felt hat will mildew if left in a damp place for sufficient time. Also make sure the storage place is clean so dust will not filter into the boxes. Storing hats in a place where they will not be continually disturbed and moved about prevents the possibility of crushing.

It is wise to air stored hats once in awhile, particularly so if there is much danger from moths in your section of the country. At such times examine them for evidence of moths and brush or rearrange them if necessary. Air them in a shaded place so the sun cannot fade the color.

#### TAKE CARE OF YOUR STRAWS

Now is also the time to start taking good care of your summer straw hats, whether or not you expect them to last more than one season. Straws must be kept very clean and in perfect condition if they are to look well and this requires constant attention throughout the summer.

Examine a new straw hat for any places that might need strengthening with a well-placed stitch or two. This precaution may save more serious trouble later on. Keep the hat clean, dusting it carefully after each wearing — and before wearing too, if need be. It is best to use a soft cloth for this because many straws are delicate and cannot stand the use of a regular brush. A piece of velvet is ideal for dusting straw hats if you have such material on hand. However, any soft fabric will do.

Because much of the attractiveness of a straw hat depends on its perkiness, take good care of its shape and trim. Keep straws in boxes and well supported with tissue paper. Do not put them on hat stands — this may distort the crown.

Keep ribbons, veils, and other adornments in good condition. Veils can be ironed between two sheets of oiled paper or steamed to remove wrinkles. Check any floral decorations frequently to see if leaves or flowers need attention. Be careful in handling straw hats. To put one on, press it downward into position on your head by using the palms of your hands on the lower crown area. If decoration prevents this and the brim must be grasped, do so with extreme care so as not to bend the brim or pull it away from the crown.